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MEMORANDUM FOR:

DR. KISSINGER

THROUGH:

Richard T. Kennedy

FROM:

State Dept. review completed

John Negroponte

SUBJECT:

General Minh and the 1971
Presidential ElectionsON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS
APPLYIntroduction

This paper discusses the forthcoming presidential elections in South Vietnam in terms of General Minh's chances of winning. I plan to write another paper on the consequences of a Minh victory although the imponderables involved in that one make it a much more complicated subject.

I have also attached an end-of-tour report prepared by political officer Theresa A. Tull on October 23. It is an excellent discussion of the general political situation in South Vietnam and I recall that her reporting was about the best that came out of the embassy during her more than two and one half years there.

Minh's Chances of WinningA. Minh's Intentions

To ascribe Minh a chance of winning the elections, one must assume he will run. Minh has not formally declared his candidacy; nor are there any signs that he is developing a campaign machinery. We have indirect indications that Minh will run,

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But Minh may, in fact, have no such definite intention. Perhaps at this stage he is just trying to smoke us out. Minh may not run unless he feels he has the nod from the U. S. government. In coming months, Minh and his followers will doubtless be watching carefully statements by U. S. officialdom concerning SVN's presidential elections looking for indications, however far-fetched, that we favor one outcome or another. To the Vietnamese it is inconceivable that the U. S. would not have a preference.

B. Minh's Assets

If Minh runs, he will be the first credible opponent that any South Vietnamese Chief of State has ever faced in an election. Diem ran against straw men. Thieu's opponents in 1967 were on the whole stronger, but there were ten of them, thus dividing the opposition vote and allowing the Thieu/Ky slate to win by a 34.8 per cent plurality.

The combined showing of the three closest contenders in 1967 (Dzu, Suu and Huong) represented 38 per cent of the vote. Today Dzu languishes in jail, Suu is dead and Huong is too infirm to run.

The field, therefore, is relatively open to Minh. I can think of no dark horses to be taken seriously. Ky might try a suicidal spoiling operation, but I doubt it because Ky, brinksman that he is, has in past crises always come around at the last minute; and there are no civilians on the current scene with stature anywhere approaching that of Thieu and Minh.

What is more, Thieu is sponsoring a presidential election law which would intentionally limit the number of candidates by requiring prior endorsement by a minimum of 40 legislators or 100 provincial and municipal counsellors. With a total of 137 Lower House members, 60 Senators, and slightly more than 500 provincial and municipal counsellors, this would make for a theoretical maximum of nine candidates. But, in fact, if the bill passes in its present form, Thieu will make an energetic effort to secure many more than the required minimum of endorsements. At the rate he is courting the country's elected officialdom, he may well be hoping for a majority endorsement. Under such circumstances, Minh may be the only other presidential hopeful certain of acquiring the minimum number of endorsements. In any event, I feel certain that if the election law passes in the form Thieu desires the field will be restricted to at most three candidates.

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On the face of it, it would appear somewhat anomalous that Thieu is favoring an election law which would permit the grouping of oppositionist forces behind Minh. Setting this anomaly aside momentarily, Minh's sources of strength in a two or three way race would probably fall into the following broad groupings:

1. The An Quang Buddhists:

Tri Quang's Buddhists supported Phan Khac Suu in the 1967 elections. Their support was not openly declared but rather through the grapevine. As a result of this low-key backing Suu carried the cities of Hue and Danang and the province of Thua Thien in which Hue is located. Despite traditional buddhist strength in I Corps, however, the overall vote for Thieu/Ky in that region was 189,405 versus 172,667 for Suu. In II Corps, the coastal reaches of which have also been Buddhist strongholds, Thieu won 437,433 votes versus 114,510 for Suu.

Gauging Buddhist strength on the basis of the 1967 elections may be somewhat misleading since they did not openly commit their organization to Suu and they were still in a weakened condition resulting from the failure of their 1966 anti-GVN "struggle."

They have since revitalized their organization and in the Senate elections of August 30, 1970, the Buddhist supported slate of Vu Van Mau came in first. Assessing Buddhist electoral strength on the basis of this election is, however, complicated. Voters had the option of casting up to three ballots for their three preferred choices and while the An Quang Buddhist leadership reportedly instructed the faithful to vote for only one slate, Mau's, we don't know if they really followed these instructions. We also don't know what portion of Mau's vote represents the second and third choices of person's other than An Quang followers who, in a single ballot election, would not have voted for Mau at all.

4,301,139 voters cast a total of 9,815,372 ballots in the Senate election. Of these, Mau received 1,148,073 ballots. The slate did particularly well in traditional Tri Quang strongholds sweeping all but one province of I Corps and all of coastal II Corps. Assuming for a moment that all the votes for Mau were from Tri Quang Buddhists and that they cast only one ballot each, then Mau's tally amounts to about 25% of the electorate.

These are, however, both unrealistic assumptions. It is probably more realistic to split the difference between this 25% figure and the ratio of votes for Mau to total ballots case (roughly 12%) thus coming out with an

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estimated An Quang Buddhist voting strength of 18.5%. This, in my opinion is an optimum figure, and in the forthcoming election the estimated Buddhist vote would go to Minh, if the Buddhists openly declared themselves in support of his candidacy.

At this stage Buddhist intentions in the foregoing regard are by no means clear. According to the officer in our Saigon Embassy charged with following Buddhist affairs, the An Quang Buddhists are divided on whom to support, if anyone, and how. It is conceivable, and in my own view, probable, that because of internal divisions An Quang will not support Minh overtly, thus reducing the likely Buddhist turnout in his support.

2. The Urban Vote:

Discontent is highest in Vietnam's urban areas and so is the level of voter sophistication. Thieu lost the major cities in the 1967 elections. Suu won Hue and Danang handily, while Tran Van Huong won Saigon by a hair (he received 137,962 votes versus 135,527 for Thieu out of 545,611 votes cast).

Urban discontent is likely to persist through the election period, and well beyond, and Minh is likely to inherit Suu and Huong's urban constituencies. So he should carry the cities. Of course, the An Quang Buddhist and urban vote overlap substantially in I Corps. In effect, what is added to Minh's strength in this category is the likelihood of carrying Saigon.

3. The Protest Vote:

For lack of a better term, this was the one we used to describe the vote for runner-up Truong Dinh Dzu in 1967. To everyone's surprise Dzu received 17.2% of the total vote in 1967. Dzu's source of support in that election was never definitively ascertained. He may have had tacit VC backing in areas where they could influence the voting and his populist style and "peace platform" neatly distinguished him from the other ten slates. To many who voted for him, Dzu probably represented the only real alternative to GVN policies being pursued at the time.

Minh could doubtless benefit from some of Dzu's legacy. But it would be quite a balancing act to appeal to the hard core protest vote and still win some of the more "respectable" support that accrued to Suu and Huong in 1967. If Minh postures himself as outlandishly as Dzu, his urban bourgeois and more conservative Buddhist vote will fall off. Moreover, the "protest" vote which accrued to Dzu in the countryside in 1967 has probably

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fallen off substantially in view of improved security conditions and the weakened VC apparatus. For example, Dzu won more than 20% of the vote in IV Corps in 1967. It is inconceivable to me that if he ran again he could get anywhere near that large a vote in that region.

My guess is that if Minh runs on a moderate platform he will get about half of the votes (i.e. 8 1/2%) which went to Dzu.

Thieu's Assets

This section deals with what could interchangeably be called Thieu's assets or Minh's liabilities.

Thieu is the incumbent. He has shown that he is prepared to use the administrative machinery to promote his electoral campaign. He is assiduously cultivating support of elected officials from the national down to the hamlet level. In contrast Minh has no apparent campaign machinery.

Thieu has a solid record of achievement to point to. The countryside is more peaceful, the GVN is stronger and less dependent on U.S. combat forces and the VC are weaker. Testifying to increased rural security is the fact that the number of registered voters in the 1967 presidential election was 5.8 million; it will be over 7 million in 1971. More than 1/2 million of this increase will be in IV Corps.

Thieu's regional sources of support will be as follows:

1. The Delta: He made a strong showing there in 1967 despite the fact he is a Central Vietnamese and some Saigon based politicians alleged to us that regionalism was a significant factor in voter behavior. (It clearly was not in '67. Thieu and Dzu combined, both Central Vietnamese, got close to 60% of the vote in IV Corps. The combined IV Corps showing of Suu and Huong, both Southerners, was less than 15%.)

So Thieu will do at least as well in the Delta as four years ago and probably much better. Security has improved substantially and by all accounts the Delta is more prosperous than it has been in years with higher productivity, subsidized rice prices and low taxes. The benefits of these factors, plus the increased voter registration, will for the most part accrue to Thieu. This prognosis is born out by the fact that in the Senate elections the Thieu supported slate of Senator Huynh Van Cao won in 11 of 16 provinces and placed second in two others.

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2. Greater Saigon and the Catholic Regions of III Corps: Thieu may lose Saigon itself but he can probably count on the Chinese vote in Cholon to make it a close race. In the greater Saigon region he can count on solid northern refugee Catholic support. Again, improved security should redound to his favor and I doubt he will have any difficulty building his 1967 base of roughly 33% of the vote in III Corps, counting Saigon, into a healthy majority in 1971.

3. The Highlands: Minority groups generally vote with the government in Vietnam and this will likely hold true again for the mountain areas of II Corps in 1971.

Thieu's overall showing in II Corps in 1967 was strong, higher than his national average. (His nationwide showing was 34.8%. In II Corps he won 45%.) With open Buddhist support Minh may give him a run for his money in coastal II Corps, particularly Binh Dinh, Phu Yen and Khanh Hoa, but it is doubtful it would be enough to ^{prevent} ~~reach~~ the 1967 45% figure for II Corps ^{from reaching} ~~over~~ 50% in 1971.

4. I Corps: On a regional basis Thieu made his poorest showing in 1967 in I Corps where he only got 189,405 out of 758,951 votes case (roughly 25%). Suu was a close runner-up with 172,667. In a two way race with Minh, I think Thieu would lose I Corps.

Summary Analysis of Minh's Chances Against Thieu

The foregoing analysis is replete with imperfections. We don't know that much about the anatomy of the Vietnamese electorate. Thieu's most obvious sources of support by ethnic, religious and occupational breakdown are the ethnic minorities, Northern Catholics, the Army and the Civil Service. These are difficult to quantify because of extensive overlapping. On a regional basis, Thieu will likely lose I Corps, perhaps draw even in II Corps and win decisively in III and IV Corps.

Having a handle on the administrative apparatus gives Thieu an incredible advantage and one which he presumably knows how to use. Without actually manipulating the ballots themselves, he will be in a position to stimulate a high voter turn out in remote areas where he is strong (e.g. IV Corps and the Highlands of II Corps) and to let voter turnout follow a more natural course in areas of weakness such as the cities.

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The very fact that Thieu himself is sponsoring a presidential election law which might effectively reduce the field to two or three candidates suggests that he views the forthcoming elections with confidence. He also clearly wants to move into his second term with a majority mandate which would better enable him to deal with the other side as representative of the South Vietnamese people.

Should Minh win it will be because of miscalculations in Thieu's rural voting strength in III and IV Corps and because officials down the line turn out not to be as reliable in delivering the vote in the countryside to Thieu as Thieu expects them to be. But my guess, based on an estimate of a 70% vote for Thieu in III and IV Corps, 50% in II Corps and 30% in I Corps, is that Thieu will win about 60% of total votes cast.

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SOUTH VIET-NAM -- Impressions of Political Prospects

Prospects for Overall Survival

I left South Viet-Nam in mid-September 1970 considerably more confident about that country's chances for survival in a non-Communist form than I was shortly after my arrival there in January 1968. Two and a half years after the Tet 1968 Offensive South Viet-Nam and its constitutionally-elected government is very much a going concern. There are serious problems, of course, the economic situation being the most obvious and critical of these, but these problems do not appear insurmountable.

It is my impression that if United States policy remains constant, South Viet-Nam can absorb the additional burdens of Vietnamization without losing significant ground to the enemy, and will eventually be able to sustain the entire military manpower load of a dragged-out, though considerably diminished, war. Sizeable economic inputs by the United States or other allies will be necessary, however. With a constant US policy, the fragile South Viet-Nam constitutional framework, which has the potential to provide a basis for stability and orderly change of government, has a good chance of survival as well.

However, should the US attempt to impose or coerce the GVN into accepting a coalition government with the Communists, it is in my opinion doubtful that the present constitutional system, or a non-Communist South Viet-Nam in any form, could long survive. Even if the present GVN could be convinced to risk such a course, which is unlikely, there would be severe opposition to such a move from those elements which form the basis of present GVN strength -- the military, the Catholics, and other hardliners. Should Thieu

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Viet-Nam Working Group
October 23, 1970

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move toward coalition, I doubt that the present GVN could survive, since more hardlining elements might well make a grab for power. The constitution could go by the boards and the struggle would continue. Should the US curtail economic assistance in such a contingency (to force compliance with a coalition policy), an eventual Communist takeover would be almost inevitable. Any US decision to impose a coalition government on the South Vietnamese would have to be made in the realization that, to the average South Vietnamese, coalition with the Communists means a Communist takeover within five years. The US should not pursue that particular avenue unless it is fully willing as a nation to accept responsibility for the consequences, i.e., a Communist South Viet-Nam.

Constitutional System -- Alive and Well

In spite of occasional slippage along the line, a constitutional system of government has been developing in South Viet-Nam over the past three years. The institutions called for in the April 1, 1967 constitution have been organized and are developing a degree of independence. The executive branch is powerful, but there is a functioning National Assembly that is not a rubber stamp. There is a functioning Supreme Court which is developing into a genuine check on Executive authority and protector of individual rights. The corruption-fighting Inspectorate, although handicapped by lack of power to enforce unpopular decisions, is functioning and has made some slight impact, and its members have remained remarkably free of allegations of personal corruption.

In spite of shortcomings, the institutions are there, they are functioning, and there is an encouraging attitude on the part of the Executive of acceptance of limitations on its authority. Thus far, President Thieu has given the impression of willingness to work within the constitution, which, after all, is a major source of his strength since it legitimizes his own position.

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In conversations in early September, members of the Assembly, Supreme Court, and Inspectorate all credited President Thieu and the Executive branch with good will and willingness to accept the limitations on his authority which the existence of these branches of government impose. Some of these contacts felt that the constitution, although initially a foreign transplant, is acquiring a life of its own that could survive US departure from South Viet-Nam. They view the constitution as a basis for stable government, a means by which all of the many fragmented elements of South Viet-Nam's society can be represented and have a voice in their own government without any one group dominating the game.

A serious test of President Thieu's good will vis-a-vis the constitution may occur in the next several months when the Supreme Court rules on the next phase of the Tran Ngoc Chau case. The Court has given ample advance warning that it will probably decide in Chau's favor, possibly going so far as to order Chau's release from prison. A Supreme Court Justice told me that in that likelihood he expects that President Thieu will release Chau. In my opinion, Thieu will attempt to avoid openly defying the Supreme Court but will seek some legal pretext for continuing the court battle, with Chau remaining in prison.

Political Party Activity

Generally speaking, political party activity is flourishing in South Viet-Nam. The political party law, rather than condensing political parties, as intended, has produced a spate of new parties, and there has been some factionalization of older parties. The lesson of the need for unity in the face of a united enemy has not yet taken, and the effect of freedom to operate politically has been to produce a spate of individualistic parties. After this novelty (freedom to operate politically) wears off, however, there is hope that some consolidation of parties will take place.

One spur to such consolidation may well be the recent Upper House election. The fairness of the

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election has been a cause for encouragement of nationalist politicians and may stimulate some serious party organizational effort in preparation for the 1971 Lower House elections. In addition, although the Upper House election was ultimately resolved on the basis of personal prestige, religion, and the following of loosely organized blocs of people rather than by political parties, some parties made respectable showings. The 4th, 5th, and 6th place finishers were political party slates (Nhan Xa, PNM, and RDV respectively). Had some parties not been divided (such as the Nhan Xa) they might have finished in the money. After the election several unsuccessful political party figures told me that they saw in the election a clear warning that parties must expand and consolidate and develop cadre systems if they are going to win elections, as well as a clear indication that if these efforts are made they could be quite successful.

1971 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

At this point, the principal contenders in the Presidential race in 1971 are military men: President Thieu himself, Vice President Ky, former General Duong Van Minh, and possibly (though this seems unlikely to me) Prime Minister Tran Thien Khiem. There are no serious civilian contenders at this point (An Quang-backed Senator Vu Van Mau is excluded from serious consideration for the Presidency because he is a Northerner). However, Vice Presidential candidates will most likely be civilians. A look at the strengths, weaknesses and potential running mates of these potential candidates, follows.

Potential Candidates

A. Nguyen Van Thieu - At this point Thieu appears to be the strongest candidate. His probable elements of support include (1) the military, (2) civil servants, (3) fairly solid Catholic support (which is not inconsequential since 3 of the top 4 slates in the Upper House election were regarded as Catholic slates), (4) other hardliners, including

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the small but locally meaningful old-line political parties such as the VNQDD and RDV, and possibly (5) the Progressive Nationalist Movement (suspected by some South Vietnamese politicians of being a "phony" opposition party) core of which is the Tan Dai Viet party. (In the Upper House election campaign, Minister of State candidate Nguyen Tien Hy told Chinh Luan that President Thieu is a former Dai Viet. This is the most open statement of Thieu's alleged former political connections I have seen. Although I doubt that the PNM will openly identify itself with Thieu, or vice versa, it is not inconceivable that a certain harmony of interests exists between the two which would lead the PNM to support Thieu in the 1971 election, perhaps in return for the Prime Ministership for PNM leader Nguyen Van Bong.)

Thieu is somewhat handicapped because he is weak in the cities, and because he has not opted for a formal cadre-type political organization to work for his candidacy. He may well be attempting to overcome these weaknesses by opting for the rural vote by means of his land reform program and by frequent visits to the provinces and by meetings with rural officials as they graduate from courses at the Vung Tau National Training Center. Thieu recently convened in Saigon the more than 500 provincial and municipal councillors elected in June for discussion of their role and probably for some pro-central government proselytizing as well. I doubt that Thieu will formalize his courtship of elected officials by creating an organization around them (a prospect which has been rumored), but he probably looks to this base for 1971 campaign assistance. Thieu will, in any event, have the electoral advantage that control of the administrative apparatus gives any incumbent. Thieu may also be hoping to receive the votes of many of the people brought under GVN control since 1967 through accelerated pacification efforts. The recently pacified may be receptive to suggestions from GVN officials that they vote for a particular candidate, i.e., Thieu.

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Possible Thieu-led slates include:

a. Thieu/Huong - Although former Prime Minister and now Senator Tran Van Huong is old and in failing health, he remains personally respected and could bring non-Catholic Southern support to the Thieu ticket. As Prime Minister Huong was somewhat of a political rival of the President, and Thieu may feel more comfortable with a less political running mate.

b. Thieu/Huyen - The Southern Catholic Upper House Chairman has been mentioned in Saigon circles as a possible running mate either for Thieu or for Duong Van Minh. Either alternative is possible, although I would guess Huyen would opt for the more dependably hard-line candidate, should he in fact be asked and decide to accept. Huyen's presence on the slate would ensure united Catholic support, which Thieu would probably get anyway, and bring needed Southern support. Not to be discounted is the fact that Huyen took Saigon in the Upper House race and ran well in other cities and generally throughout the country. Huyen's reputation for integrity and independence would enhance Thieu's image should he run with him. However, Thieu, a Catholic, might not wish to have a Catholic running mate, and Huyen may not wish to surrender his cherished independence. Huyen's poor health might make the rather inactive Vice Presidency appear attractive, however.

c. Thieu/Bong - I discount the possibility that Nguyen Van Bong will run with Thieu as Vice Presidential candidate, although his name is occasionally raised in that connection. Bong would prefer to be Prime Minister, a more active job than the Vice Presidency. Besides, should Bong run with Thieu it would in effect "blow the cover" of the Progressive Nationalist Movement, which he heads, as an opposition party. As Prime Minister Bong could retain some distance from Thieu.

B. Duong Van Minh, a Southern Buddhist, former General, is considered by many as a serious contender in a race against Thieu. Minh is regarded as

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acceptable to the An Quang Buddhists, to oppositionists, Buddhists and Southerners in general, and to those seeking peace, a potential source of support Minh courts with frequent vague pronouncements about the general desirability of peace and reunification. Minh himself is a vacillator, not particularly energetic or bright, and he might not want to exert himself to the extent of mounting a campaign for the Presidency. If he could be handed national leadership without actively seeking it, he would accept it. Minh seems aware of the general belief that he is manipulable, and is not happy with this thought. He may opt to sit sulkily on the sidelines, waiting either for the call to head an interim government should Thieu fail or for 1975, when Thieu will be constitutionally denied the opportunity to seek a third term.

If he elects to run, Minh will be a formidable opponent for Thieu. He will get the opposition vote almost automatically. Some opposition-oriented voters, however, might prefer to see the An Quangers and other oppositionists tested a little more before entrusting them (through Minh) with the Presidency.

Possible Minh-led slates include:

a. Minh/Mau - The Northern Buddhist Senator would swing An Quang support behind Minh, and he would add regional balance to the ticket. Having just been elected to the Senate, Mau might prefer to remain there for a time, but he is known to be ambitious and at 57 might decide that 1971 is his year to seek national office. (He could presumably retain his Senate seat if unsuccessful in the Presidential race.)

b. Minh/Huyen - Southern Catholic Huyen would broaden Minh's appeal on the religious front. Huyen has generally been considered acceptable to Buddhists, in spite of his strong identification with the Catholic Church. Should Minh be suspicious of An Quang he might turn to Huyen, who regards Minh as a decent man. However, Huyen might prefer running with a clearcut hardliner.

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C. Nguyen Cao Ky is restless as Vice President, is too active a man for the position, and is ambitious; he probably views himself as a more active, more effective President than Nguyen Van Thieu. Ky is clearly testing the water and will probably continue to do so until the last minute. Ky has some measure of support, from the Air Force and possibly the Marines, and from some mid-level officers in other branches of the RVNAF to whom he talks a good anti-corruption game; from Northerners and diehard hard-liners; and he has some appeal to youths who like his flamboyant style. However, his power position has been considerably eroded by Thieu since Tet 1968 and he has serious marks against him, principally that he is a Northerner and a military man, and that traditional-minded Vietnamese find his style distasteful. Should Ky decide to run, the best Saigon rumor at present lists Supreme Court Chief Justice Tran Minh Tiet (a very ambitious Southern Catholic) as a possible Ky running mate.

I do not take a Ky candidacy very seriously. He could not defeat Thieu, and would succeed only in embarrassing himself or serving as the spoiler of Thieu's chances to the benefit of a more soft-lining candidate such as Big Minh. It is doubtful that Ky would want to see this, and I would expect that at some point late in the game he will withdraw from the race, perhaps in return for a promise of "crown prince" status from Thieu in 1975 (when Thieu will not be eligible to run for President). What Ky would do in that event (between 1971 and 1975) is an open question. There is at best a slight chance that Thieu would want him as a running mate, and probably an even slighter chance that Ky would accept that role. Perhaps he could return to the Air Force, or could be persuaded to accept an ambassadorship. Taiwan or Korea might find Ky's views and style acceptable.

Most Likely Winner -- Thieu

In view of the strengths and weaknesses outlined above, I conclude that at this point the candidate with the best chance of victory in a

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reasonably free election is Nguyen Van Thieu. However, in view of the possibility that Ky could play a spoiler's role, Thieu would benefit from a revision in the election process to provide for a runoff election should no one candidate receive a majority of votes cast in the first round. In a two-man second-round contest Thieu, aided by the administrative machinery of his government, could probably defeat even so potentially attractive a candidate as Big Minh.

Should Thieu be Re-Elected?

In my personal view, yes.

This would be a poor time to change leaders in South Viet-Nam. The resultant inefficiencies and uncertainties which a change in chief executives would entail would be unfortunate and damaging. President Thieu has done a reasonably competent job of governing. He is not a despot or dictator, and seems to be becoming something of a civilian while retaining control of the military. He seems to be moving his country into a modified, conservative type of democracy which could well serve Viet-Nam. He is staunchly anti-Communist without being inflexible, as indicated by his forthcoming attitude on peace proposals. Although hardly a "popular" President in the sense of being a charismatic leader adored by his people, Thieu probably commands the largest following of any figure on South Viet-Nam's fractionated political scene. A change of leaders in 1971 would give the other side a definite advantage which it would exploit, perhaps by sharp, large-scale military attack during the change-over period in the hope of catching the new government unprepared.

A not-too-consoling advantage of the US policy of supporting the South Vietnamese constitutional system, of course, is that in the event Thieu is defeated in an honest election we will be able to continue our support for and to work with South Viet-Nam's constitutionally-elected leader.

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Hopefully, however, from the standpoint of government stability, South Viet-Nam will have the added cushion of four more years of basically the same leadership under Thieu to consolidate the gains made during his first term of office.

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